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A
DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW
OF
THE YEAR
1799,

COMPRISED IN TWELVE MONTHLY

Sections.

BY WILLIAM COLE.

Norwich:

PRINTED BY STEVENSON AND MATCHETT, MARKET-PLACE.





THE Author thinks it necessary to observe, that the following Lines were composed in consequence of an engagement with an intimate Acquaintance, who is a considerable proficient in Drawing, that each party should sketch something in his Own Way, and, on the first of every Month, exchange their productions, for the mutual amusement of both Families.*

To HIM, therefore, in whom the Lines originated, they are inscribed, by his most respectful and obliged Friend:

W. C.

S..... N.

** Mr. Paul J. Harston, an eminent
Agriculturist*



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DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW.

JANUARY.

COULD but my humble genius aspire,
To catch one spark of THOMSON's sacred fire;
And paint in strains of poetry serene,
The least perspective of his changeful scene;
Spring's infant blossoms, Summer's scorching rays,
Autumn's ripe fruits, and Winter's snow-clad days,
Then might these anxious efforts hope to send
A *monthly* tribute worthy of a Friend.
But, ah! I feel within a fearful void,
A certain something *there* still unemploy'd,

B

Without

Without which Genius, like the glow-worm's spark,
Sheds her pellucid lustre in the dark;
But on the dawn of learning's brilliant day
Becomes eclips'd, and gently fades away.

Hail EDUCATION! Wisdom's fertile source!
How shall I traverse out thy devious course?
To thee my nightly orisons I sing,
And snatch one feather from thy eagle wing.
But like a youth with airy shadows caught,
Venture beyond my depth and sink in thought;
But rise my muse, Aonian virgins bright,
Let fancy soar beyond its usual flight;
Let scenes of nature be my subject still—
Friendship demands the task—inspires the quill.

With many a drenching storm and tempest drear,
Lo! JANUARY ushers in the year;
The noisy cataract swells with snowy froth,
As the rude boreas bellows from the north;
Prefage of Winter's vast congealing pow'r,
With gentle pressure falls the flaky show'r,
'Till hill and dale the white-rob'd scenes adorn,
And clothe in bridal vest the new year's morn.

The

The icicles impend from cottage eaves,
 And sharp encrusted snow, instead of leaves,
 Weighs down the knotty timbers' spreading bough,
 And fetters to the ground the useless plough.
 Heedless of care the wanton school-boy glows,
 And tracks in varying steps the pathless snows;
 Through the keen air the spotless snow-ball flies,
 In diff'rent forms the frozen pillars rise;
 Now rolls the gathering handful down the hill,
 And now swift gliding o'er the glossy rill;
 He feels not winter's penetrating breath,
 He fears not danger on the verge of death,
 Till more and more o'erburthen'd (in a trice)
 The vent'rous boy's ingulf'd beneath the ice.

Urg'd by necessity, the timid hare
 Quits her snug form and finds the treach'rous snare;
 Some, bolder grown, within the garden steal,
 And cautious snatch their vegetable meal.

The congregating birds, by hunger prest,
 For food and shelter make their winter's quest;
 To small inclosures some in covies fly,
 Some more domestic in the barn-yard lie;

But daring Robin, more familiar still,
 Taps at your window with his slender bill,
 Implores your charity in gestures strong,
 And pays your kindness with a Christmas song.

The woolly tribe, by hunger's instinct led,
 To where the moss-grown ant hill rears its head,
 Paw from its shelving sides the drifted snow,
 And crop the bladed grass that springs below;
 Or pick the curling ivy from the trees,
 As to their sides the sleety showers freeze.
 Save when the lonely ewe brings forth her kind,
 In some warm corner shelter'd from the wind;
 The rustic, watchful of his new-year's lamb,
 To the warm rick-yard drives the bleating dam;
 Where, as they gambol in their snug retreat,
 His grateful heart with honest raptures beat.

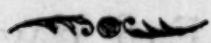
Now through Carmarthen's finely pictured vale
 Drives the rough storm, and keener blows the gale;
 Pent by the British Alps, whose summits rear
 Their snow-capt peaks high o'er the vallies drear;
 Where

Where the shagg'd goat ascends the dang'rous steep,
 And the *rock-ouzel o'er their surface sweep;
 Where the vast map unfolds a distant clime,
 And from the glowing East day soars sublime.
 The Isle of Man, and Wicklow's tow'ring hills,
 Woods, mountains, rocks, and frost-imprison'd rills,
 Break at one view upon the wide-stretch'd sight,
 And fascinate the bosom with delight.

But here let wandering fancy rest awhile,
 Within the limits of our sea-girt isle;
 Nature displays, in this domestic sphere,
 Enough to picture times revolving year,
 Though half its beauties are emboss'd in snow,
 And vegetation lies in embryo;
 Though navigation's lock'd in ice's chain,
 And checks the busy scene of great Mark-lane;
 The zeph'rous winds will soon their ships unmoor,
 And Commerce's golden pinions spread once more.

* An inhabitant also of the Italian Alps, called in Switzerland Berg-
 amzel, or Mountain Blackbird.

FEBRUARY.



STILL from the north inclement Boreas blows,
 And cliff on cliff arise the drifted snows,
 Its blast the weary passengers assail,
 Blockade the road, and stop the fleeting mail.
 Commerce yet hovers round with lingering wing,
 And gleams impatient on the tardy spring;
 The bleak horizon ting'd with purple hue,
 Congeals in hoary frost the evening dew;
 As countless luminaries o'er the sky,
 Trim their pale lamps and twinkle to the eye;
 And through that vast immeasurable space,
 The silver moon begins her evening race;
 Around her horns the wide encircled ring,
 Portends a change (as ancient shepherds sing);
 Quick o'er the vale the raw condensing mists
 Blunt the keen air and gelid frosts resist;
 Sudden from east north-east the piercing blast
 Shifts to the west, and west by south at last;
 The zeph'rous murmur swells into a breeze,
 And strips the icy plumage from the trees;

Tranflucid

Translucid ice-drops trickle from the cot,
 Where pale-fac'd melancholy marks the spot:
 In whose mud walls bright day-light scarcely shines,
 Through Winter's tedious months the widow pines.
 In all those ills that poverty bestows,
 Scarce on the hearth the cheerless ember glows;
 Whilst through each crevice of the shatter'd door,
 With murmurs hoarse the beating tempests roar;
 Louder, and louder still, the whirlwinds rage,
 Pierce the weak heart, appals declining age;
 'Till worn-out nature quits this nether sphere,
 A sad, sad victim, to the rigid year.

Now brooks and rivers swoln with recent rains,
 Break o'er the mounds and inundate the plains;
 The massy sheets of ice indignant ride,
 Crushing obstructions down the rapid tide,
 Till milder rays arrest their pond'rous force,
 And time dissolve them to their parent source.

Though winter lurks beneath yon northern hedge,
 The cheerful wood-lark gives her early pledge
 Of infant Spring's exhilarating rays,
 And to her Maker chaunts the note of praise.

Soon

Soon as in Pisces shines the tepid sun,
 And wider o'er the sky his circles run,
 The sportsman ceases with his gun to rove,
 (Save when the woodcock flushes in the grove)
 And the lorn partridge, that escap'd his fate,
 Plumes up his crest and seeks another mate.
 Attach'd by instinct to her native place,
 The raven, foremost of our feather'd race,
 Lays the foundation of her wicker nest
 On some tall oak that soars above the rest;
 And o'er her new-laid eggs maternal brood,
 Heedless of blust'ring winds or usual food.

Lo! winter shrinks, as milder suns succeed,
 O'er the brown rugged heath or barren mead,
 And various symptoms of returning spring,
 Pierce the thaw'd ground, and through the coppice ring.
 The thrush and chaffinch, with melodious notes,
 Perch on the leafless spray and swell their throats;
 And rous'd to action by the mid-day's sun,
 The insect tribe their circling courses run.
 Where pale primroses, shelter'd from the cold,
 Just here and there their tender leaves unfold;

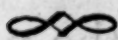
And

And on the margins of the warm parterre
 Snow-drops and full-blown crocuses appear.
 Though Flora still within her walls confin'd,
 Shrinks at the rustling of the north-east wind;
 Nor ventures far for any length of time,
 Except on borders of a warmer clime,
 Uncheck'd by hollow winds, or frosts severe,
 Where smiling summer blooms throughout the year.

Again the farmer, rous'd to vernal care,
 Elate with hope reviews the rusted share;
 Slow to his hand the rugged fallows yield,
 Whilst ridge by ridge he turns the stubbled field;
 Or preparation makes for peas and beans,
 As o'er the long-neglected plough he leans;
 With snail-like pace the yoke-gall'd cattle drag,
 The new-laid coulter cuts the knitted flag;
 Soon the rough breast shines with the grating foil,
 And Ceres' distant visions soothe his toil.



MARCH.



MARCH enters with a mild benignant ray,
 Dispels the mist, and cheers the face of day,
 The genial sun gay butterflies revives,
 And lures the bees to venture from their hives.
 Spent by the recent blasts, stern Boreas sleeps,
 As from his sedge screen Priapus peeps;
 But soon the restless winds to northward veer,
 And check the blossoms of the doubtful year—
 As a fierce tyger, routed by the hounds,
 At first intimidated scours the grounds,
 But, as he nearer to the coppice draws,
 Whets his keen tusks, and stretch his grisly jaws,
 With pace reluctant to the thicket goes,
 Looks back and grins upon his daring foes:
 As Spring appears at first so Winter flees,
 Nor dares to combat with the western breeze.
 The budding trees proclaim their stores of fruit,
 And rich expanding nature joins pursuit.
 Far to the north the routed foe recedes,
 Nor baneful frost advancing Spring impedes;

Till

'Till urg'd by Boreas to renew the fight,
 He howls and bellows through the stormy night;
 His noxious breath the trembling Spring difarms,
 And blasts the beauties of her infant charms.

But soon the season settles more serene,
 And new-plough'd fallows variegate the scene;
 The farmer's yard with cackling poultry rings,
 The stock-dove coos—the mellow throistle sings;
 The croaking frogs swarm over ponds and brooks,
 And the old manor-house resounds with rooks,
 Whose constant bickerings and knavish life
 Display an emblem of domestic strife;
 All seem to imitate the bustling town,
 What's rear'd to-day, to-morrow levels down;
 With fell impunity their neighbours cheat,
 And on their ruins build themselves a seat.

Again the youth the rapid woodcock flush,
 As with the fieldfare and the red-wing'd thrush,
 And other birds, that migrate for a time,
 To shun the rigours of a northern clime,
 Returning seek a less frequented place,
 To lay their eggs and rear their callow race,

In Sweden, Norway, or some arctic shore,
 Where eager sportsmen less their haunts explore.—
 Soon as the op'ning Spring begins to smile,
 The wide-wing'd gannet seeks her fav'rite isle,
 Spreading with eggs the insulated rock,
 Round which the noisy hoards in myriads flock,
 "Infinite wings! till all the plume dark* sky
 "And rude resounding shore is one wild cry;"
 And as the sun's declining rays diffuse,
 As evening closes with refreshing dews,
 The torpid bats from gloomy mansions creep,
 And their nocturnal course in circles sweep;
 The moping owl too seeks his evening prey,
 And shuns, like Vice, the clearer face of day.

Lo! now the new-yea'd lamb, yon shepherd's pride,
 "Tott'ring with weakness by its mother's side,"
 Heedless along the winding path-way reels,
 Each thwarting furrow trips his infant heels;
 Whilst the keen kite, high circling in the sky,
 Its victim views with penetrating eye;
 With hunger gaunt he pounces on his prey,
 And in his talons bears the lamb away.

† gannet —

Brac'd

* "Plume dark air."—THOMSON'S SEASONS.

Brac'd by the virtues of a vernal fun,
 The stronger twins beside their mothers run,
 With sportive glee their bleating dams assail,
 Each bounds his head and shakes his fleecy tail,
 Alternate at the half-fill'd udder plucks,
 And down the life-inspiring nectar sucks.

But now the bitter equinoctial gale
 Impedes the budding of the shelter'd vale;
 Retreating Winter, like a sturdy foe,
 Contends each doubtful footstep blow for blow,
 In vain for food the lowing heifer strays,
 The conic hailstone on the pathway plays;
 Scarce sprouts the turnip with its yellow green,
 And empty rick-yards close the rigid scene.



APRIL.

A P R I L.

UNUSUAL rigours brood in yonder storm,
 And gay Vertumnus' finer tins deform;
 The daisy from the dappled mead is fled,
 The dark blue violet droops her fragrant head;
 Young vegetation seems by frost confin'd,
 And nature shudders at the north-east wind.
 In vain the shepherd shields with anxious care
 The mournful mother and her bleating pair;
 No fields of blooming turnips greet his eye,
 No herbage springs, no luscious crops of rye;
All these fair prospects are by frost destroy'd,
 And Spring presents a melancholy void.
 Extend the scene to yonder busy town,
 Alike they feel the fickle season's frown,
 The drifting tempest bellows through the street,
 Borne on by singing hail or stormy fleet,
 On the keen air they turn with sick'ning gaze,
*Without the means** to raise the social blaze;

The

* Few but will recollect the scarcity of coals at this period.

The long-protracted Winter drains the store,
And keeps the welcome collier from our shore:

The bleak wind shifts, but still the prospect low'rs,
And storms of fleet are chang'd to drenching show'rs;
The land-drain pours, the useful plough stands still,
Loud sweeps the current down the swelling rill,
'Till gath'ring as it rolls with murmurs harsh,
It bursts the river's bed and floods the marsh.

Still tardy Spring moves on with sluggish pace—
Scarce the warm sun-shine cheers the downy race,
That paddle o'er the pool in search of food,
Each stately dam conveys her infant brood;
Now shields her nestlings from the piercing storm,
And acts the mother in her tend'rest form.

At first swift flitting o'er the daisied plain,
The twitt'ring swallow visits us again;
But soon their numbers fix the wav'ring Spring,
In the warm sun they skim on easy wing,
'Till eve approach, they seek a place of rest,
And in the cottage chimney build their nest.
But who can paint the melody that floats
Through the pied grove, in various sounding notes;

Aurora

Aurora opens with the skylark's song,
 Whose notes are clear, and soaring pinions strong,
 The music strengthens with the strength'ning day,
 Till in full chorus on the "half-robed" spray,
 The tuneful choirs the length'ning day beguile,
 With notes of love that bid creation smile.
 And when at closing day the long-stretch'd shade
 Falls in dark angles cross the op'ning glade,
 The nightingale loud carols through the grove,
 Sacred to melody and rural love!
 But scarce the bird of eve has perch'd the spray,
 Before that welcome harbinger of May,
 The cuckoo, with his never-varying song,
 Welcomes gay Flora and her vernal throng;
 And ere the foliage tinge the hawthorn green,
 The jetty floe leads forth the blossom'd scene;
 Next, shelter'd by a wall, (in fancy's reach)
 The luscious apricot and ruddy peach,
 The fragrant nect'rine too, the juicy plumb,
 And may-duke cherry, in their order come.

Now the tir'd school-boy searches every bush,
 With eager hope the timid bird to flush,

The

The infant leaves scarce screen the moss-wrought nest,
 Slowly he steps with palpitating breast;
 No twig escapes his scrutinizing eyes,
 Elate with joy he ^{grasps} seize the speckled prize;
 In vain the bird her wonted nest explores,
 And in sad strains her recent loss deplores;
 High on the white-wash'd balk the eggs are strung,
 Or in a cage confin'd the half-fledg'd young.

Well can I picture too in mem'ry's eye
 Those days of rural innocence gone by!
 When *my* big bosom at the noon-tide hour
 Throb'd at the springing of a vernal flow'r;
 When tip-toe by the hawthorn hedge I stray'd,
 Or in wild gambols o'er the village play'd;
 Blest retrospection! of my childish years,
 Still your wild flights maturer reason cheers,
 But ah! to trace thy devious steps is vain,
 Youth's spring, once blossom'd, never blows again.

M A Y.

SLOW breaks the foliage on the May-day morn,
 And slowly vegetates the new sown corn;
 Winter reluctant yields his gelid power,
 And latent frosts still check the tender flower—
 As a firm hero, on the verge of death,
 Grasps each pulsation of expiring breath,
 Each moment weakened with excessive pains,
 He feels life ebbing slowly through his veins,
 With one convulsive struggle dares the foe,
 But breathless sinks beneath the death-dealt blow :—
 So feel we now, in eastern winds severe,
 The last sad struggles of departing year.

The half-starv'd ewe prowls o'er the barren plain,
 The hungry heifer lows for food in vain,
 Turns from the rickless yard with downcast head,
 And wanders o'er the fields un stall'd, unfed,
 Till from the west congenial breezes rise,
 Pregnant with balmy show'rs and milder skies.

Again

Again the animated warblers sing,
 And all at once break forth the cheerful spring.
 Welcome sweet parent of poetic hours,
 Maids twine your garlands cull'd from old May flow'rs;
 Round the fantastic pole together throng,
 And in wild cadence chaunt the festive song;
 Whilst the gay shepherd from his labours freed,
 Keeps holiday, and tunes his oaten reed.

Now the full foliag'd hedge-row bounds the scene,
 In nature's charms its many tinted green;
 Here swells the juicy crab, and by its side,
 The blooming hawthorn in her silver pride;
 There the deep curling ivy breaks the view,
 And here the fragrant briar of lighter hue,
 The rough-ribb'd nut, the honey-suckle brown,
 Contrast their shades, and smiling nature crown.
 Fresh springs the verdure o'er the dappled plain,
 Foster'd by brighter suns and gentle rain;
 All wears the garb of Spring, save yon tall wood,
 That many a penetrating storm withstood;
 There the majestic oak scarce deigns to smile,
 Lord of the wood, and guardian of our Isle!
 Slow through its trunk the vital current springs,
 The founding axe loud through the coppice rings;

Chip whizzing yields to chip, he reels at last,
 And falls, with horrid crash, the first rude blast;
 Soon as his giant length is stretch'd along,
 The busy peelers round his body throng,
 The rough bark stripping from his rugged side,
 And from his trunk the massy boughs divide—
 Though thus arrested in his budding charms,
 And victim like divested of his arms,
 Though to the beach the drag his carcase bear,
 Where haggard faws his heart in piecemeal tear,
 Yet, phoenix like, he proudly soars again,
 Britannia's bulwark! guardian of the main!
 Looks round in triumph, and bids Commerce smile,
 From the rough Texel to the flowing Nile.

Now fades the primrose on yon mossy bed,
 And pendant cowslips richer odours shed,
 Their modest beauties waving in the wind,
 Attract the notice of the youthful mind,
 O'er the rich pasture roves the blushing boy,
 His infant bosom palpitates with joy,
 He plucks the blooming flow'r with heart-felt glee,
 To press for fallad, or imbrue for tea.

Beside

Beside the dew-damp path at dusky night,
 The shining worm emits her sparkling light—
 With modest Venus vies the brilliant star,
 And lures her hero if he wanders far.
 But ere Aurora morning's blinds unfold,
 Or the horizon streaks with radiant gold;
 Whilst yet the stars their twinkling lustre cast,
 She shuts her silver lamp, and all is past.

And now each thicket that contains a nest,
 Hid from the school-boy's penetrating quest,
 O'erflows with chirping young, whose int'rests share
 The sole attention of the tuneful pair;
 'Till fully fledg'd from bush to bush they rove,
 By easy stages skirt their native grove;
 When strong of wing, a longer stage they try,
 Then cater for themselves—and off they fly.



JUNE.

J U N E.

AS yet the wayward season's chilling breeze
 Checks the swoln blossoms of the leafless trees,
 The blooming thorns their scanty fragrance shed,
 And deep-ting'd elder scarce unfolds her head,
 'Till from the tepid south succeeding show'rs
 Tempt the gay nymph to sport her fairest flow'rs,
 Bid the young rose its blushing charms expand,
 And the pale lilly tempt the spoiler's hand;
 The fertile orchards rich with blossoms glow,
 White as the hoary frost or alpine snow,
 The daisied meads their yellow garments wear,
 And all creation smiles a gay parterre.

The cheerful shepherd now with artless theme,
 Pens his meek flock along the limpid stream,
 On either side the sturdy rustics stand,
 To guide the panting wether from the land,
 One rears his dripping face above the tide,
 The other presses oft his fleecy side,

From

From head to tail the grating filth expunge—
 Then deep again the bleating victim plunge;
 From side to side they lave his fleece once more,
 And guard him stagging to the welcome shore.
 Soon as the sun the humid wool has dried,
 The busy shearers, seated side by side,
 By the rough horn the struggling wether seize,
 And strip his sweating coat with dext'rous ease;
 Whilst on the spot the blithsome damsel stands,
 To fold the new-shorn coat with careful hands;
 Collects with industry each scatter'd piece,
 And neatly folds them in the inner fleece.

And now the busy bee its honey gleans,
 From blooming clover or more fragrant beans;
 From tube to tube th'industrious insect hies,
 Then seeks his well-known hive with loaded thighs;
 Relinquishes to other's care his golden store,
 And with the opening morning roves for more.

Ere yet the distant village hum we hear,
 Break indistinctly on the list'ning ear;
 Or tow'rs the smoak from many a cottage hearth,
 The contemplative angler seeks his path

Along

Along the verge of some meand'ring brook,
 Fathoms its depth, and baits his barbed hook,
 To lure the finny prey, he frequent tries,
 With baits of paste or artificial flies;
 But all are vain, except the angler's hand,
 With cautious skill, the tempting prize command,
 And with exact agility define
 The fav'ring moment when to jerk the line—
 If roach or gudgeon, in a deep flow rill,
 At the *first* nibble strike the dodging quill;
 If they are perch, or tench, or keen-eyed trout,
 A moment longer let them sport about;
 But should you angle the voracious pike,
 Still greater patience use before you strike.—
 Blest recreation for a pensive hour!
 Oft let me feel thy tranquilizing pow'r;
 The love-lorn stripling, on the turfed brow,
 Reclines his ear and views the streamlets flow,
 Entranc'd awhile in hope's illusive dream,
 And heaves his breast responsive to the stream,
 Each morn and eve pursues his lonely plan,
 And shuns the more-frequented paths of man.

The shaded hedge and thorn entangled grove,
 Each day their rural scenery improve;

The

The fragrant briar unfolds her modest rose,
 And the sweet woodbines' simple flow'rs disclose;
 The tufted vetch, the purple nightshade too,
 Twine round each thorn, and variegate the view.
 The distant landscape waves with dark green corn,
 And the grasshopper chirps across the lawn;
 But ah! the tuneful choirs their warblings cease,
 As Summer's animating scenes increase;
 No more the founding wood or shade-girt rows,
 At morn and eve with melody o'erflows;
 No voice is heard, save chirping now and then,
 The yellow hammer and the crested wren;
 Or here and there perchance a straggler's throat
 Throbs for a moment with its feeble note;
 Pensive and mute they perch the thick-leav'd thorn,
 With all their melody of love withdrawn.
 But hark! the early rising mower calls,
 Beneath his scythe the blooming layer falls;
 The farmer's anxious season is at hand,
 To reap the produce of his fertile land—
 Ryegrass and trefoil lead the busy way,
 Next fields of luscious clover, scented hay,
 The odoriferous harvest hastens fast,
 With upland lawns, and verdant meadows last.

J U L Y.

PARCH'D by the sultry sun, the thirsty earth
 Gapes in wide chasms 'cross the arid path;
 Now the gray cuckoo's hollow note is fled,
 And vegetation droops her languid head:
 But still the whetting scythe, at early dawn,
 (Whilst yet the dew-drop glistens on the thorn)
 Is heard resounding through the grassy dale,
 Borne on the pinions of the morning gale;
 Behind, in rustic innocence, the lass
 Moves slowly back, and strews the welting grass,
 Which, scatter'd to the noon-tide's scorching heats,
 Exhales at closing eve its balmy sweets.
 The grateful farmer now his meads reviews,
 And ere the morning sun-beams sip the dews,
 Marshals his little tribe, "in form'd array,"
 To toil with sweating brow the sultry day;
 Some strew the new-mown swathe, some wield the rake,
 Whilst stronger youths the lusty hay-cocks shake,
 Turning their dew-moist bottoms to the air;
 Others the long and fragrant ridge prepare

Against

Against approaching eve, or storms that brood,
 To rear the hasty cock or ruffet load—
 But when with heaps the fertile vallies swell,
 The farmer's weather-boding fears dispel,
 Loud sounds the braided thong, but louder still
 The jolting waggon rattles down the hill,
 Reeling the well-bound loads majestic ride,
 The thoughtless peasant whistling by their side,
 The scented pyramid its summit rears,
 And all combin'd his anxious bosom cheers.

Rous'd by meridian Sol's refulgent ray,
 The insect legions usher into day,
 Myriads on myriads quit their winter holds,
 Buz round the frighten'd herds, or tease the folds,
 Or to the dairy or the larder steal,
 Disgorge their taint, and snatch their hasty meal;
 Where nurs'd by heat, in foul corruption bred,
 The crawling tribe in countless numbers spread,
 Voracious feasting on the new-made cheese,
 Or drill their passage to the bone with ease.

The lowing oxen and the snorting steed,
 O'ercome with heat, neglect the luscious feed,

Seek the sequester'd shade or gurgling pool,
 To lash the flies and sun-burnt bodies cool;
 All nature sickens with meridian heat,
 And even *man* selects a cool retreat.
 Is it for thee alone, ambitious soul!
 The various fruits appear as seasons roll;
 The scarlet strawberry blushing on its bed,
 The pendant strings of currants white and red;
 The grateful plumb, the cooling cherry too,
 And od'rous raspberry, tempting to the view;
 For thee alone delicious juices waste,
 To cool thy parching lip, or please thy taste?
 On either side spontaneous bounties flow;
 Let meditation then with placid brow
 Survey each branch of nature's spreading tree,
 Who sheds her choicest gifts, O man! for thee.

Now to and fro the varying currents rise,
 And curdled clouds stretch 'cross the azure skies;
 In the horizon's verge condensing show'rs
 Raise their black summits like gigantic tow'rs;
 Nearer and nearer draws the fable cloud,
 And peals of awful thunder rumble loud;

The

The vivid lightning 'cross the cloud extends,
And all at once the copious show'r descends.

Now blossoms many an umbelliferous flower,
And the pale jessamine decks the shaded bower;
By the clear river blooms the meadow sweet,
And modest mushrooms spring beneath our feet.
Cool'd by repeated rains, the sun-burnt hill
Wears a new face, but more refreshing still
The verdant prospect of the lowland mead,
That yields the grazing ox fresh stores of feed;
The beans and peas approaching lice defy,
And the young turnip braves the dang'rous fly.

Beneath yon wide-stretch'd cloud, in narrow space,
The setting sun just beams his ev'ning face,
Across the fields his magnifying ray
Darts its huge shade, and bodes a finer day,
The dense dark clouds of wat'ry burthens freed,
Serene and lighter atmospheres succeed.

Again the sun resumes his torrid heat,
Again the fly-gall'd cattle seek retreat
In the cool ford, where oft the fearful boy,
First step by step the limpid stream enjoy;

Till

Till bolder grown the deeper water braves,
 And floats and wantons on the turgid waves;
 Dives from the precipice, devoid of fear,
 Then buoys again and shakes his dripping hair.
 But ah! too oft does sad example urge
 The daring stripling from the river's verge;
 On strings of swelling cork at first he rides,
 Or on inflated bladders smoothly glides;
 Suspended as a child on leading strings,
 Or as a nestling strives on buoyant wings;
 Eager he struggles for the distant land,
 And drops his foot to found the grating sand;
 But still the bottom lies beyond his reach—
 Alarm'd, again he struggles for the beach;
 Impel'd by fear he strikes with giddy pace,
 The dashing water laves his writhing face;
 The bounding bladder with the force unties,
 He eddies round, and for protection cries;
 The stifling water pours—alas! 'tis vain,
 He sinks, and rises—sinks, and floats again;
 Turns one convulsive struggle to the shore,
 Then quickly sinks again—to rise no more.

AUGUST,

AUGUST.

CERES reluctant fills her golden horn,
 And ruflet ears yet wave with half-grown corn;
 Thick clouded atmosphere the sun obscures,
 The milky kernel with slow pace matures;
 Repeated showers swell the rippled pool,
 Refresh the earth, and keep its surface cool.
 But ah! how melancholy glooms the day,
 To those whose meadows teem with unrick'd hay,
 The weather-beaten swathe with rain embrown'd,
 No longer sheds its grateful odours round;
 Day after day succeeds, th' impetuous rain
 Drenches the mead and batters down the grain—
 By furious whirlwinds tost, the apples now
 Fall prematurely from the nodding bough;
 The landscapes lose their animated form,
 And the big harvest lingers on the storm—
 The hurricane fair Flora soon alarms,
 The rich parterre is robb'd of half its charms;

Her

Her annuals run to seed and quickly die,
 And few indeed that gaudy race supply;
 Save on yon wild uncultivated hill,
 That juts majestic o'er the purling rill,
 Where the dull asses round the furze bush crop,
 And sheep unnumber'd nibble o'er its top;
 Blossoms in all its pride the purple ling,
 Like a gay garden in the midst of spring,
 There verdant harts-tongue, and the curling brake,
 Where oft in ambush basks the harmless snake;
 With health their bold pinated leaves expand,
 Though scarce a vegetable ^{deck} grace the land.
 About this busy season of the year
 The swifts, or long-wing'd swallows disappear;
 Across the Channel, where with ease they gain
 On fleeting wings the tepid shores of Spain;
 Yet on by instinct urg'd the feather'd host
 Skim the rough straits, to Afric's torrid coast.
 Now cawing rooks return to roost at night,
 And vipers bring their venom'd broods to light;
 And o'er the delving inundated bog,
 The wriggling tadpole leaps a perfect frog.
 At last the dropping season breaks away,
 Home grinds the loaded wain with scentless hay,
 The

The burnish'd sickles every hand employ,
And yellow harvest reels with "tipsy joy."

All gracious heav'n! thy threat'ning clouds suspend,
And one short month of genial sunshine send,
To house the anxious farmer's grateful store,
And close the scanty harvest of the poor;
Mature the luscious wall-fruits, and enforce
The backward season to its usual course.
Ere the bright sun-beams tinge the mountain's brow,
The joyous rustics marshall'd in a row,
Stretch 'cross the yellow glebe and whistling blythe,
Tune their wild notes to the responsive scythe;
Beneath whose sharpen'd edge the rustling grain
Forms the long swathe athwart the furrow'd plain;
But when the dew-damp morning brightens fair,
The zealous lords their bounteous meals prepare,
Profusely spread on nature's verdant board,
Beneath an oak, whose wide-stretch'd arms afford
A rich-wrought canopy to screen the breeze
That shakes the foliage of the neighb'ring trees;
The hasty breakfast o'er—the bottle drain'd,
With all their rustic merriment regain'd,

F

They

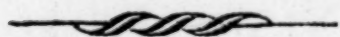
They bind the full-ear'd sheaf, or raise the flock,
 Nor heed the noon-tide sun or village clock;
 Still on they toil, nor from their labours yield,
 Till ev'ning twilight drives them from the field.

But soon the low'ring concave dusk and dun
 Spreads a thick veil and shrouds the rip'ning sun,
 Leaving no speck or streak of azure sky,
 Through which to faintly glance his wat'ry eye;
 All wears alike the same protracting form,
 The gentle gales increase into a storm,
 To northward shift—the busy scene retard,
 And but few corn-ricks grace the farmer's yard.



SEPTEMBER.

S E P T E M B E R.



H E A R D ye that gun loud echo from afar?
 The first dread signal of approaching war,
 Against that inoffensive feather'd race,
 Which man and dog alike delight to trace.
 Hark! hark again! the death-designing blow
 With dire explosion lays the victim low;
 The *sportive war* commenc'd—whilst yet the fog
 Stretches its vapours cros the unwholesome bog;
 The warrior fallies forth in frock bedight,
 Whose ample pockets shroud the game from sight;
 Buskin'd and buckled tight in thick-soled shoes,
 To brave September's penetrating dews;
 The leather shot-bag o'er his shoulder slung,
 And ready papers on his button strung;
 With whip and whistle, flints, and powder flask,
 Still on he toils nor heeds the tedious task;
 The well-taught pointer hunts each field with care,
 Snuffing with eagerness the tainted air.
 Sudden he stops—

Then slowly creeping, on his game intent,
 Shifting to windward for a stronger scent;
 At last firm rooted on three legs he stands,
 Watching the motions of his master's hands;
 The feather'd game in all directions fly,
 The sportsman marks his bird with steadfast eye,
 The whizzing charge impels its death-like force,
 He soars aloft—but falls a lifeless corse.
 The broken covies top the quickthorn fence,
 A sacred barrier 'gainst a man of sense,
 When yet in golden pride the full-ear'd corn,
 In seasons, like the present, waves unshorn;
 But some there are (though few we hope to find)
 Who more to murder than to sport inclin'd,
 Break down the fences, 'cross the corn-fields run,
 With *three fine dogs* and *double-barrell'd gun*!
 Infatuated, dead to sense and shame,
 And blind to honour, *bag* they but the game;
 But when the covies jug at closing day,
 The lurking poacher listens to his prey,
 Marks well the stubble where the old birds call,
 And waits impatient for his midnight haul:
 When all is hush'd, with stalking-horse in hand,
 Like a dark thief, he steals across the land,

His

His dreadful engines of destruction set,
 He drives whole covies in his deep-mesh'd net;
 Or o'er the barren fields his drag-net tries,
 To catch the frighten'd birds where'er they rise.

But now, the influence of a genial day
 Inspires the farmer's bosom with a ray
 Of latent hope, to house his yellow grain,
 Before 'tis damag'd by autumnal rain;
 No sooner through the mist the bright-eyed morn
 Obliquely peeps, and dries the dew-wash'd thorn;
 Than to the field the rattling waggon flies,
 And the whole village in commotion rise;
 Quick from the pitcher whirls the wither'd flock,
 As round each load the little gleaners flock;
 Jostling each other from the waggon's side,
 To snatch the falling corn with jealous pride;
 The mother yet in wider circles try,
 But frequent turns askance a parent's eye,
 Whilst far aloof half bent with aged care,
 The grandam picks the solitary ear—
 Close pressing sheaf on sheaf, alternate round,
 Quick tow'rs the circling wheat-stack from the ground;
 The

The rest within the barn's capacious bays,
 Secured from autumn's fickle season, lays.
 No sooner is the busy season o'er,
 Than the proud owner reckons up his store,
 Exulting sees his barns and rick-yards fill'd
 With the vast produce of a farm well till'd—
 The beef and pudding on the table smoke,
 The supper o'er, succeeds the rustic joke;
 The flowing cann goes round—the harvest song—
 And tipfy homewards reel the happy throng.

But ah! too soon the weather-glass again,
 With concave silver indicates more rain;
 The shell-less snails at verge of ev'ning crawl,
 And the dew trickles from the dank green wall;
 On drives the furious equinoctial blast,
 And sets the lagging rear of harvest fast;
 * The brilliant meteors flash athwart the sky,
 Whilst dark dejection marks the farmer's eye.

Now

* The author alludes to a considerable meteor he saw on the evening of the 22d.

Now from the Shetland Isles the num'rous host
 Of herrings furnish all the northern coast
 With food and labour for the neighb'ring poor,
 Used to the blowing sail and dashing oar;
 Some shift the canvas, others guard the line,
 Some braid the nets, and some the cordage twine;
 Whilst some the salt and drying-house command,
 And head the barrels for a distant land.



OCTOBER,

OCTOBER.

ROUS'D by the influence of the bright-beam'd morn,
 Again the farmer dries the dark-stain'd corn;
 Through thick-set briars the eager sportsmen rove,
 To flush the rich-plum'd pheasant from the grove;
 But soon the clouds across the dusky vale
 Spread their broad bosoms to the rustling gale;
 Keen lightnings flash, the hurricanes increase,
 And new-raised hopes of closing harvest cease;
 'Till white-robed frost dissolves to sparkling dew,
 And tints autumnal intercept the view.
 The ash and elm to fine ting'd lemon fade,
 The scollop'd maple yields its orange shade,
 Each tree and bush its varying hues arrange,
 And the wan aspin trembles at the change;
 The spreading oaks at autumn's season frown,
 And fade from footy green to russet brown;
 But hardier yet the rugged horn-beam last,
 Clings to its stem, and weathers winter's blast.

Now

Now pressing close on ling'ring harvest's rear,
 The busy seed time crowns the waning year;
 O'er new-plough'd fields the village children swarm,
 Inur'd by nature to the ruthless storm,
 And drop with careful hands the fresh-lim'd grain,
 Kernel by kernel on the dibbled plain;
 Or, slowly stalking on with measur'd stride,
 The seedsman strews his ample handfuls wide;
 Whilst the rough harrows break the stubborn soil,
 The surface smooth, and close autumnal toil.

But keen Invention ever on the wing,
 From whence new patents and projections spring,
 Stretches her pinions o'er this favor'd land,
 Joins arts and agriculture hand in hand.
 No longer local habit bears controul,
 O'er the *drill harrow* or the *rough-rib'd roll*;
 Or party prejudice denies the skill
 Of P——'s, or B——'s, new-invented drill;
 Genius alike her fostering arms afford,
 From the mean peasant to *th' enquiring Board*.*

G

Now

* The Board of Agriculture.

Now congregating on some rugged plain,
 Whose jutting cliffs o'erlook the turgid main;
 The swallow tribe, whom Autumn's blasts impel
 To emigration, twitter out "farewell ;"
 Wide spreads the feather'd cloud on buoyant wing,
 To seek in southern climes the joys of spring,
 Till hast'ning winter's busy scene is o'er,
 And time recalls them to Britannia's shore.

Still rain, succeeding rain, the plough impedes,
 And force the cattle from the lowland meads ;
 The scene is melancholy, dark, and drear,
 And alexandrine-like flow drags the year.

The bee, that during Sol's meridian heat
 From every petal cull'd its varying sweet,
 And 'gainst approaching winter stocks his hive,
 Whilst yet autumnal lurking flow'rs survive,
 Is now, by avaricious man, despoil'd
 Of that mellifluous store for which he toil'd.

At last just glancing on October's edge,
 The sun o'erlooks the variegated hedge,

Struggling

Struggling for day he darts his blunted streaks,
 And through the folding mist refulgent breaks;
 The clust'ring nut, alas! is seen no more,
 And the rich orchard yields its mellow store.
 In milder skies the luscious vintage glows,
 And the deep bowl with new-prest nectar flows.

Whilst yet the morn's obscur'd by Autumn's fogs,
 Fresh from the kennel rush the dappled dogs;
 Eager and light they snuff the op'ning chase,
 As o'er the fine-spun gossamer they trace;
 The timid hare, rous'd by the deep-mouth'd hounds,
 Steals from her form and o'er the stubbles bounds;
 The scented trail betrays her devious route,
 Loud smacks the whip, the joyous sportsmen shout;
 O'er the deep yawning ditch they heedless leap,
 Or rush precipitately down the steep;
 Or top the lofty gate on easy guard,
 Still on the fault'ring victim pressing hard;
 Whether she skirts the wood, or russet plain,
 Alike to shun th' unerring scent is vain;
 In vain "she doubles to mislead the hounds,"
 The victim's seiz'd—the echoing bugle sounds.

NOVEMBER.

NO gleam of sun illumines the short'ning day,
 But dark November reigns with rigid sway;
 The folded clouds o'er-stretch the humid sky,
 And dull *ennui* appears on either eye—
 The rustling leaves, at ev'ry tossing wind,
 O'erspread the path and wake the studious mind,
 To meditate on nature's ample sphere,
 The source and progress of declining year;
 With joy the leafing scenes of spring recall,
 Tracing their various changes to their fall;
 And, like the genius of the Grecian sage,
 Compare their course to life's progressive stage—
 As blooming youth, their budding charms appear,
 To grace the beauties of the vernal year;
 Next the thick foliage of the woods is seen,
 As in life's change, to spread a darker green;
 Then, like the grey and honour'd locks of age,
 Rich autumn's leaves declining life presage;
 Yet quiv'ring to their feeble stems they cling,
 Whilst blust'ring Boreas makes the coppice ring;
When

When, as grim death, frost penetrates the screen,
And some rude whirlwind sweeps them from the scene.

Quick winds the current through the grass-worn dell,
Storm beats on storm, and rills to rivers swell;
The atmosphere with humid vapours flow,
And the pale moon displays her lunar bow*;
'Cross the horizon vivid lightnings gleam,
And through the middle regions meteors stream;
Shaking their sparkling trains athwart the air,
'Till the whole concave brightens with the glare.
With awe sublime we thus the scenes recall,
"These are thy wond'rous works! great God of all!"

The farmer's bosom with depression fill'd,
Sees beans unhous'd and fallow wheats untill'd;
Reviews his bleating flock with fond regard,
And cattle lowing for the shelter'd yard;
With careful hand deals out his stores of hay,
'Till by degrees the season steals away.

But

* A singular appearance in the sky on Tuesday morning, the 12th inst.
See the Norfolk Chronicle of Nov. 17, 1799.

But now, beset with more intestine fears,
 Gaunt Famine's funken eye at distance leers,
 Eager he grasps the scanty stores of grain,
 War in his front, and terror in his train;
 Corn's rising price all reason's bounds defy,
 Still the demand exceeds the small supply,
 Till step by step the foul contagion spreads,
 And the black demon gathers o'er our heads—
 Ye favour'd sons of competence and ease,
 By lenient means avert the fell disease,
 Slip the strong bolts of Benefaction's door,
 And give the lib'ral handful to the poor;
 And "think, oh! grateful think," ye farmers too,
 "How good the God of harvest is to you."
 Let not the taskman with dependence toil,
 Nor taste the luscious produce of the soil,
 But from your store relieve his pressing need,
 As *reason* dictates, and as *feelings* plead;
 Yet should self-interest check the public weal,
 And the flow stream of charity congeal,
 Law blunts the shaft that poverty directs,
 And from despair the lab'ring man protects;

But

But heav'n be prais'd; throughout this gen'rous land,
 Benevolence unfolds her lib'ral hand;
 Defies the *gnomes* of scarcity and war,
 And inclination supercedes the law.

At last the sun peeps through the murky air,
 And the brown landscapes indistinct appear;
 But doubling fogs yet cap the soaring hill,
 And lurking hover o'er the pebbly rill;
 'Till the meridian of a cheerful day,
 Portends a frost, and drives the mists away;
 With hoar-frost fring'd, at morn the latent leaves
 Incessant fall and tim'rous puffs deceives;
 Rous'd by their noise the cover'd wood she yields,
 And seeks for refuge in the stubbled fields;
 Where the still courfers with their spaniels trace,
 And watch with anxious eye the short-liv'd chase;
 Soho! resounds—puffs startles from her bed—
 They shout—groves echo—and she's lost or dead.

DECEMBER.

DECEMBER.

BEHOLD, my Friend, revolving in its sphere,
 With rapid strides draws on the closing year;
 The halcyon days of revelry and song,
 That charm'd the ear, and captivate the throng,
 On time's swift pinions borne, like visions fly,
 And the dull hours of indolence steal by;
 No more the soaring lark, at early dawn,
 Floats in the air and carols to the morn;
 No more the songsters perch the naked spray,
 And sport their plumage to the radiant day;
 All mute as death, not one desponding note,
 Save where domestic robin strains his throat.

And now the rustling winds precede the storm,
 And the bleak season takes its wint'ry form,
 The hoary frosts deep fringe the leafless hedge,
 And brittle lances skirt the water's edge,
 Till more congeal'd the silver show'r descends,
 And the broad ice across the lake extends,
 Firm as a rock the polish'd surface shines,
 And busy Commerce in its chains confines;

The

The blushing stripling just return'd from school,
 Impetuous strikes across the frozen pool;
 Impel'd by exercise, health's ruddy glow
 Beams on his cheek, and mantles on his brow;
 The setting sun, whose broad gilt rays serene
 Tinge the vast hills that bound the snow-girt scene,
 Illumes the picture of departing day,
 Though Winter reigns with melancholy sway;
 But soon the picture fades, and closing eve
 Her thousand lucid ornaments receive;
 Their twinkling faces oft in chaos lost,
 Forebode an evening wrapt in hazy frost.

No sooner has the goddess of the morn
 The frozen curtains of old night withdrawn;
 Or ling'ring Phœbus scal'd the mountain's brow,
 Whose soaring heights are tipt with spotless snow;
 Than from the village flies the arduous swain,
 To seek the frozen inundated plain;
 Uncheck'd by mounds, or unannoy'd by snow,
 And where no death-fraught chasms lurk below;
 There, on his burnish'd skaites the mind enjoys
 The rigid season—as with grateful poise

A thousand devious ways his fancies find,
 Swift as the sound that hurtles in the wind;
 Now on the outer edge like lightning wheels,
 Or checks the progress on his grating heels.

But now the season, like decrepid age,
 Bears strongly forward to that awful stage,
 When parting life is quiv'ring o'er its head,
 And death stands ready to divide the thread
 That binds us mortals to this nether clime,
 And marks betwixt *Eternity* and *Time*;
 Yet ere the last reluctant moments fly,
 And *Ninety-nine* is vanish'd from our eye,
 CHRISTMAS! that rural festival of mirth,
 (On which we celebrate our Saviour's birth)
 Cheers the desponding mind, and ends the year,
 Though all the scene is desolate and drear;
 From the white cottage to the stucco'd hall,
 The dark green holly variegates each wall,
 Their prickly leaves the chimney's front adorn,
 With crimson berries spik'd on ev'ry thorn;
 And from the truant school-boy to the sage,
 One boundless holiday all ranks engage;

All

All feel a relaxation from their care,
 And in the universal banquet share.
 The farmer's hearth with blazing fuel glows,
 And "vulgar plenty" at his table flows;
 Where every workman finds a ready place,
 The traits of humour beaming in his face;
 Devoid of care each tells his Christmas tale,
 And drains the goblet of October ale.
 As the dull evenings of the year advance,
 Some find enjoyment in the mazy dance—
 Whilst some at cards, or Christmas-puzzles guess,
 And some dispute a sober game of chess;
 'Till round the fire the night's amusement o'er,
 And keen wind whistling at the outer door;
 The gossips' tale with admiration told,
 Of ghosts, sylphs, fairies, and knight-errants bold;
 Still pressing close, and closer to the fire,
 As the weak embers on the hearth expire;
 Each sees, and *fancies* what she sees is true,
 The clock strikes twelve—the taper's burning blue;
 Fearing to sit, yet dreading more to fly,
 Left *something* horrible should catch the eye;
 When some rude whirlwind sudden bursts the door,
 Pops out the candle, and the tale is o'er;

At

At once breaks forth an universal scream,
And in a phantom ends the fairy dream.

Though Flora's charms are nipt by winter's breath,
And vegetation wears the mask of death,
Yet spring with all her graces shall return,
And summer suns with wonted radiance burn.

Thus months and seasons run in easy chime,
And *time*, my friend, is multiplied on *time*;
Till youth's gay circle settles in repose,
As now a Season and a Cent'ry close;
Till age, succeeding age, to worlds give place,
And worlds, at last, are lost in *endless space*.

1799

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Norwich: Printed by Stevenson and Hatchett.
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